1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

837 the wives consent. This is regarded as a concern of the couples involved rather than a concern of society as a whole. One man said, ' If you want to sleep with someone's wife, you get him to sleep with yours, then neither of you goes after the other with poisoned arrows.'

[572] The word */kamheri* was used by ‖Ao, one of the young hunters, to express his deep feeling of friendship for John Marshall. ' We are such friends that we are */kamheri* ', he said, but, as John had no wife to exchange, this remark had its funny side which delighted the men.

No actual instance of */kamheri* came to our attention and we failed in finding out if it is now practised. One man in Gam lent his first wife to a unmarried friend, one of the gossips told us, because he was in love with his second and did not care any longer for the first, but this was a mere deviation from the rules, not an instance of */kamheri*.

We heard of several irregular sexual unions in addition to the above. Rape did not appear in stories or gossip. Fornication must be very rare because there is practically no one to fornicate with. Almost all females are married except very young girls and leathery old grandmothers. Adultery is the usual form for irregular unions
684 to take. Adultery, however, is sharply limited by several deterrents. One deterrent is
837 the incest taboo, of course, which forbids extra-marital sexual relations as rigorously as it does marriage with persons to whom the taboo is extended. The same internalized sanctions induce obedience to this rule as to the marriage regulations. The same gradation of feeling probably exists, and we expect that people comply strictly within the kindred and among close affines and are no doubt less strict with name relatives.

[586] Ease of divorce must exert a modifying influence on adulterous unions. If a married couple really want to change mates, nothing need deter them but the general difficulty of extricating themselves from the web of responsibilities which marriage entails.

In a sense, the impossibility of maintaining secrecy exerts a control over extra-
151 marital relations. There is no privacy in a /Kung werf and the vast veld is not a cover.
153 The very life of these people depends on their being trained from childhood to
182 look sharply at things and to take into their attention what they see, for they must observe the most minute marks on vegetation to distinguish from the matted grasses the almost hair-thin brown vine stems that come up from the edible roots. Hunters memorize visual impressions and are able to follow the tracks of an individual animal in the midst of a large herd in a way that seems to us miraculous. It may be a week after a hunt that they return to recover an arrow that missed, miles from the werf, remembering where it lay in the vast monotonous sameness of grass and bush. They register every person's footprints in their minds, more vividly I am sure than we do faces, and read in the sand who walked where and how long ago.

185 The /Kung value control of anger, upholding self-control as an ideal, giving it
578 group and individual approval and training for it. Despite this, volatile tempers
[411] sometimes flare and burst out of all control. And always at hand are the little poisoned arrows. They are formidable weapons. There is no antidote for the poison; at least our /Kung informants said they know none and told us of tragic deaths from the poison which would have been averted had they had an antidote.

684 Adultery, so exceedingly provocative of anger and vengeance, could be very

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GiKwe

him off the ground. Wite did not resist, but swung limp and resigned, and when Gai released him he started to walk away. Gai had eaten all the meat except one morsel, and this he tossed to Wite, who picked it up from the ground and ate it apathetically.

Only the baby set a good example. I had picked him up and was carrying him when the three young boys of Ukwane's band noticed that he was mouthing something and holding something else in his hand. For a joke they extended their palms, telling him to share what he had in his hand, and he gave it readily. It was only the crackly skin that flakes off bones when they are roasted, quite flavorless, impossible to chew; Nhwakwe was only playing with it and the boys only pretended to take a bite, then threw it away. But either the baby didn't see them reject it or didn't care because in a moment he made them another present, the meat that he had been holding in his mouth. The young boys didn't see where he got it and they were about to eat it when Nhwakwe opened his mouth to smile and they noticed. They threw it down, but the baby spat some onto his finger and offered it to them anyway, and when they didn't take it he smeared it on their chests.

After the unhappy hour of eating, the people of Ukwane's band, their appetites dulled even though their bellies were not full, seemed more relaxed and the young boys went off to join the boys from the visiting band. The youngsters were always friends. The tensions suffered by all the members of both the bands did not affect their enjoyment of each other.

That evening the boys sat down near one of the fires to talk, and they told each other all the things that had happened since they last had met, perhaps a year before. Most of the incidents had happened fairly recently and most amounted to anecdotes about the other members of the

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

them with his moods and when he stopped playing and they went away, they, too, were brooding.

Many young people had come to Nama, and together they made Nama very gay. The boys played a game with wands, throwing the wands at a hummock of ground and watching them bounce off and sail into the grass on the other side, the nearest that Bushmen come to a competitive game, for the young boys like to see whose wand goes the farthest.

The girls played a singing game with a melon. They would stand in a row that formed a half-circle dancing in place while the girl at one end would spring into the middle of the circle and toss a melon to the girl next to her in line. The game is accompanied by a rapid, intricate song of several parts sung in falsetto voices, as pretty to hear as the game is pretty to see, for the girls dance with their arms and heads as well as with their feet, like the dancers of Bali.

At that time there were only two adolescent unmarried girls at Nama. One of these was Beautiful Ungka, the other was her cousin, and they both lived with the cousin's parents at one of the werfs of the people from Gam. They were both extremely beautiful and they were lilies of the field. Since they were their parents' only children, they had no younger brothers or sisters to mind, and did nothing at all from one day to the next but adorn and amuse themselves, and this they did together, for they were the best of friends. They were straight and slender, with pale-gold skin not yet darkened and weathered by the sun of the veld, and they had flat bellies and high, small breasts. Beautiful Ungka had nipples like knobs, rounded like balls. Both girls wore ornamented aprons, soft leather capes—the best that there is. Many bead ornaments hung from their hair and swung when they walked, and almost hid their handsome faces.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

572 882 574 A sound and a fragrance accompanied them wherever they went; the sound was the sound of their ornaments clanking like crockery, dry and dull, and the fragrance was heavy and [303] sweet, the perfume of the leaves of *sa* and the wood of *tchambuti*, which Bushman women grind to powder and rub on their bodies. We would always hear these two girls coming, for they talked loudly, and a moment later we would see them appear around a bend in the path, one in front of the other, heads high and eyes cast downward, as light and long as two Egyptian sacred cats. Usually they were followed by a homely little girl years younger than they were, a forlorn little creature who would run errands for them and was content to trot after them and be their handmaiden, and usually they were on their way to visit a friend of theirs, a young married girl who was visiting at Toma's werf. When the two beauties would arrive to visit her, their married friend would stop whatever she was doing and the three of them would sit together in some shady spot to string beads or weave blossoms into crowns which they would wear, the blossoms fetched by the handmaiden, who searched the veld for aloes, the only flowers blooming in that season.

882 572 857 While they were stringing beads or weaving blossoms, a group of young boys would gather to play the wand game, and now and then, of course, a wand would land among the girls and the boys would jostle each other to retrieve it. The girl of Toma's werf treated these happenings with gaiety, for she was responsive and kind, but the other two wouldn't even turn their heads to see. Beautiful Ungka had been married, after all, and kidnapped, and widowed and divorced; grown men had fought over her and it was natural that the jostling of young boys would seem trivial. She would laugh behind her hand at them, though, then pull a long face when they would turn around to see.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

Those were two willful girls, too beautiful, too proud, too much admired, but the young boys couldn't do enough for them. It was one of their admirers who cleared the grass for the werf that the cousin's parents were building, and though the two girls teased and ridiculed the boy all the while, snickering contemptuously at him from behind their swinging beads, he worked on happily until not a blade of grass remained.

But Beautiful Ungka and her cousin were not as sophisticated as they thought they were, really, for when they would hear the music of the melon game they would abandon their poise and decorum to run for the sound, arms waving, ornaments and clothing streaming out behind, and when they found the game they had been hearing they would jump into the middle of it and play with abandon, singing loudly and dancing fast for fun. Also, Beautiful Ungka could spit through her teeth like a man. She could draw back her head and spit ten feet and she did this often, smiling scornfully, an astonishing accomplishment for such a handsome girl. Her cousin used to try it too; she could spit a little way but not nearly as far as Beautiful Ungka.

After all, they were only sixteen. There is a Bushman mood song with these words:

I am tired and old and without people,
I wish I could marry a young girl.

There were so many great fires around Nama that the sky was dark with their smoke, and when the sun rose in the morning, one day shortly after we had got there, we could not even see it until it was far above the horizon and then it appeared red and enormous, murky. In the west two new fires had sprung up, perhaps lit by Bushmen to show where they were

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

Incidentally, we were not included by the /Kung in their gift-giving patterns. They gave us a few things spontaneously which they thought we would enjoy—python meat, for instance—but did not feel obligated to reciprocate for every gift we gave them.

Asking for an original gift or asking that a return gift be made after due time has elapsed is within the rules of propriety. People prefer that others give in return without their asking, but ≠Toma says he does not hesitate to ask if a gift is long overdue. If a person wants a particular object he may ask for it. Asking is also a means by which people play upon each other's feelings. One can test a friendship in this way. One can give vent to jealousy or satisfy it by acquiring some object or making someone else uncomfortable. I thought that /Ti/kay (an intelligent man, but very touchy, uncooperative, and turned inward upon himself) used to ask for gifts to play with anger, arousing it for the sake of feeling it, as children do with fear, playing witches in the dark. His remarks one day indicated a mingling of feelings and purposes. He told us that one may ask for anything. He does, he said. He goes to a person's fire and sits and asks. (I could imagine him with his black glancing eyes sitting and asking!) He asks usually for only one or two things, but if a person has a lot he may ask for more. He said he is almost never refused but that if a man had only one pot and /Ti/kay asked for it the man might say, 'I am not refusing, but it is the only pot I have. If I get another you may come for this one. I am very sorry but this is the only pot I have.' /Ti/kay said this would not make him angry unless he were refused too many times. To be refused too many times makes a person very angry. But, said /Ti/kay, he himself did not tire of people asking him for gifts. Asking, he claimed, 'formed a love' between people. It means 'he still loves me, that is why he is asking.' At least it forms a something between people, I thought.

I have stressed the mitigation of jealousy as the important value of gift-giving. /Kung informants stressed more the value of putting people under the obligation of expressing friendship by making the friendly gesture, even if it is only a token gesture. Demi said, 'The worst thing is not giving presents. If people do not like each other but one gives a gift and the other must accept, this brings a peace between them. We give to one another always. We give what we have. This is the way we live together.'

Absence of Stealing

One day, when I wanted to talk with a group of informants about what the /Kung considered to be wrong-doing, I began with /Ti/kay. He said promptly, 'Making crooked arrows and fighting', but could not think of anything else. Informants had previously said that not sharing food would be the worst thing they could think of. Others had mentioned that the breaking of the incest and menstruation taboos would be very wrong and that girls should not sit in immodest posture. No one seemed to think lying was very serious wrong-doing, and no one mentioned stealing. I finally asked directly and Gao Medicine said they had not thought to mention stealing because they did not steal.

We had heard of the episode of the man taking honey from a tree, honey which had been found and marked and was therefore owned by someone else, and being killed for it by the owner. That was the only episode of stealing that we discovered.